

The CIA and Allen Dulles

President Eisenhower has done the expected thing in choosing Allen W. Dulles to succeed General Walter Bedell Smith as director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The selection comes as no surprise, but is nevertheless gratifying, because Mr. Dulles has long been recognized as a man uniquely well qualified for the post—a hush-hush assignment of vital importance to the security of the Nation.

Apart from his prewar career as a successful lawyer, and his earlier diplomatic career from 1916 to 1926, Mr. Dulles—brother of the new Secretary of State—has been distinguished chiefly for his impressive work in the field of intelligence. Quietly efficient, he has established an outstanding record as a key figure in the European operations of the Office of Strategic Services during the Second World War, and more recently—since August, 1951—as deputy director of the CIA. Certainly, there are few if any American civilians who know as much as he does about so-called cloak-and-dagger techniques or who can match his qualifications for running the big and largely supersecret organization that is charged with gathering and evaluating for the country all kinds of information bearing upon the strengths, weaknesses and intentions of potential enemies—particularly the enemy behind the Iron Curtain.

The CIA is a relatively young agency. The United States, which used to feel safe behind the barriers of the Atlantic and Pacific, had no organization quite like it until the last war. With the advent of that war, however, our country awakened to the fact that it was sorely in need of modernizing its inadequate intelligence machinery. Today, although a number of flaws remain to be eliminated, the result is that we have ceased being amateurs in espionage, counterespionage and related activities. As General Smith has just observed, our work in this field—which actually consists mostly of the drudgery of painstaking analytical studies—is as good as that of any other nation, with the possible exception of the Soviet Union. Further, in his opinion, it should continue to show constant improvement because of the CIA's program aimed at developing a corps of career officers that "in a few years will become the best in the world." Considering the unprecedented dangers of the atomic age, American security requires nothing less than the best in that particular.

Mr. Dulles—whose nomination will be sent to the Senate as soon as General Smith is confirmed as Undersecretary of State—is admirably equipped to press forward with the improvement effort. Among other things, he is a good administrator, and if the CIA has deadwood and waste motion in it—as some critics have charged—there will be sound corrective action when he becomes the director. In any event, the Nation can be confident that its top intelligence organization will be effectively run in the hands of an experienced statesman.